The Municipal Refresher Course

A Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative History

Researched & Written by Walter Walchuk

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University of Alberta and Alberta Municipal Affairs

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Acknowledgments

On this the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Banff Refresher Course, I wish to extend my most sincere congratulations to those who now administer the program, to those who have benefited from the program, and particularly to those far-sighted individuals who started the program and who have spent countless hours ensuring its continuation.

From the time of the first refresher course held in 1939 on the University of Alberta campus, the program has developed into a highly organized annual event as a result of the exceptional co-operation among the University, administrators, Alberta Municipal Affairs and various other groups of individuals. Through the years, the Banff Refresher Course has provided a unique learning opportunity for all those involved in the administration of local governments. The broad range of topics offered by these courses has expanded administrator's knowledge in many areas such as community planning, legislation, local government finance and accounting, and communications. I hope that the Banff Refresher Course will continue to benefit administrators and municipalities of Alberta through its commitment to excellence and life-long learning.

Again, I congratulate all those involved with the program and extend special congratulations to the first graduating class of the Senior Executive Fellows Program. Together we can work toward the establishment of a society of certified Municipal Administrators in Alberta. I wish you all more success in your future endeavours.

With sincere regards,

Dennis L. Anderson

Minister
Alberta Municipal Affairs

On behalf of the Faculty of Extension and the University of Alberta, I am most pleased to join you in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Municipal Refresher Course. This celebration is a tribute to the commitment of Alberta's municipal administrators and Alberta Municipal Affairs to continuing professional education. The fact that the Municipal Refresher Course has been a long-standing tradition in this province also symbolizes a commitment to lifelong learning, an idea that is central to the mission of the Faculty of Extension.

This historical commemorative brochure describes the evolution of an important educational event, one that is unique in Canada and features a rich partnership between practitioners, government and the university. We are proud to be a part of the history of the Municipal Refresher Course. We are proud to have an important role in the professional development of Alberta's municipal administrators, and to serve your community of learners both inside and outside the classroom.

The trends described in this retrospective account are positive. I look forward to the future and an even stronger cooperative relationship between the Society of Local Government Managers of Alberta, Municipal Affairs and the Faculty of Extension.

Best wishes to all,

Dennis Foth

Dean
Faculty of Extension
University of Alberta

It is my pleasure, as President of the Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators' Association, to extend my best wishes for a successful 50th Annual Refresher Course to be held at Banff.

However, in 1988 there is much more to celebrate. This year will record the culmination of the first completed Senior Executive Fellows Course by the honouring of the first-ever graduates to complete eight mandatory courses successfully.

It is the end of the beginning of further education for local government management beyond the Local Government Certificate Program, and the beginning of a new College of Local Government Management, a goal now set which will provide local government Administrators with an incentive to continue learning, to become a member of what we hope will be a great fraternity as the future evolves, a fraternity which will be a challenge to Administrators, both present and future.

John McGowan

President
Alberta Rural Municipal
Administrators Association

A golden anniversary represents a lifetime of growth and achievement. Evidence of the growth is listed in chronological order in the History of the Municipal Refresher Course. The proof of achievement is characterized by the courses and training offered in the 1988 brochure and by the number of administrators registered in the course.

How fortunate we are to have the opportunity to renew friendships and pursue professional expertise annually in the beautiful surroundings of Banff. Many of us look forward to meeting and discussing our concerns with understanding fellow administrators. Away from the pressures of the work place and without interruption we can concentrate on our studies and enjoy the fellowship of our peers before we return home with new skills, knowledge and enthusiasm.

It is fitting that this year marks the culmination of years of planning and working towards the professional designation by the formation of the Society of Local Government Managers of Alberta. Through the efforts of the representatives from the University of Alberta, the Provincial Government and the two Associations, the Municipal Refresher Course and now the professional designation, have become a reality. Congratulations are extended to those administrators, who, through years of preparation, receive the designation they so richly deserve.

May the years ahead continue to provide the same sense of direction for the many members attending the Refresher Course, to instill high standards and efficient levels of local government administration and a strong sense of fellowship in what can be a lonely but a satisfying career.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy McVey, L.G.A.

Acting President
Local Government Administrators of Alberta

Preface

In June 1988, the 50th Annual Municipal Refresher Course will be held in Banff. The impetus for the Course came initially from an association of secretary-treasurers of rural municipalities. It came to fruition because of the recognition by the Department (now Faculty) of Extension of the University of Alberta for the need for adult education in this area and the continued support from the Department of Municipal Affairs. Its success has spawned many other short courses.

Throughout the last 50 years there has been a consistent effort to provide an opportunity for learning that was directly relevant to the jobs held by the participants. The records of the Municipal Refresher Course (MRC) show the speakers to include government ministers, deputy ministers, staff of Municipal Affairs and other government departments, university professors, local government administrators, councillors and professionals. While lectures were an important focus to the learning process, course participants also learned much from each other.

Since 1939 some things about the Course have remained relatively constant: e.g., since 1950 it has usually been held over three days and at the Banff Centre. Others elements have changed considerably. It was initially attended by secretary-treasurers of rural municipalities and a few elected rural councillors. In time, the number of rural councillors increased considerably as did the number of urban administrators and councillors.

Today those in attendance include administrators in rural and smaller urban municipalities and school systems. Elected officials have had their own symposium since 1978.

The preparation of this booklet was initiated by Dr. A. Einsiedel of the Faculty of Extension and funded equally by the University of Alberta and by Alberta Municipal Affairs.

I have been most pleased to prepare this material. It is always a joy to report a good "news" story — in this case, the history of a long standing tradition of cooperation between government, university and independent associations of administrators.

I acknowledge with thanks the assistance of the current members of the Planning Committee and Don Bancroft, Jack Fleming, Tom Forgrave, Edd Lesage, Karen Rilstone, and John Skuba for review and helpful comments of an earlier draft of this material. A special recognition is due Bob Robertson for his work in layout, design and liaison with the printer.

Walter Walchuk

The Beginnings

As a supplement to the main text, a series of quotations is provided. Excerpted from documents used in the research, these hopefully provide a sense of the presentations, the discussions and the humour of the MRC which could not otherwise be captured.

1920's

"I knew most of the Secretary-Treasurers first as field supervisor with the Department of Agriculture." (Donald Cameron, 1968 Proceedings)

The task of an administrator of a municipality in the first two decades of this province's existence certainly had its challenges. New Acts, amendments and the rewrite of legislation that affected municipal operations were growing in number. Population and economic growth were erratic. The forms of government in the province were essentially set by 1912 with cities, towns, villages, rural municipalities (changed to municipal districts in 1918) and improvement districts.

Although Edmonton and Calgary were using models of professional management such as the commission board form as early as 1904 and 1908 respectively, the vast majority of the municipalities had a very small or part-time staff.

The provincial government recognized that training and experience in local governance and administration varied greatly and hence introduced a system of municipal inspections in 1907. With continued immigration, the growing number of rural municipalities (55 in 1912 and 167 in 1918) and hardships during World War I, the Department of Municipal Affairs would often focus, in its annual reports, on the need for local governments to manage wisely.

By the early 1920's, the need for a formal training program for administrators had been firmly established. Fifteen years were to pass before this program was realized. In the interim, administrators and elected officials undoubtedly received some informal education at their conventions.

Rural Administrators Establish Association

The roots of the Banff Municipal Refresher Course are found within the Association of Rural Administrators of Alberta (ARAA).

The first meetings of rural secretary-treasurers in Alberta were convened by Albert Tovell of the Hail Insurance Board (est. in 1918). Their focus was to discuss the "intricate business of dealing with hail problems." However, it was at a convention of the rural elected officials, the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts (AAMD) in 1921, that a committee was struck to draft a constitution for an association for rural administrators. The proposed bylaws were considered by an executive committee of administrators in Calgary in March 16, 1922, and formally adopted at ARAA's first annual convention held in Calgary in July 1922. By this time, the Association had ninety-six paid members.

Education an Early Focus

An early focus of the new group was the education of its members. In 1924 the associations for the urban and rural administrators were in contact with Cecil E. Race, Registrar of the University of Alberta and Mr. Lamb, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs seeking their support for a course in "municipal accounting, etc." It would be "put on at a small nominal fee [$25] by the university." For another $35 students would take an exam and suitable diplomas would be awarded. Mr. Lamb was invited to speak on the matter at the Third Annual Convention of Alberta Association of Municipal District Secretary-Treasurers to be held in Calgary in March, 1925.

1937

"I will repeat once more that where there is a conflict between the municipal council and the Government, the Secretary-Treasurer is paid by the council and not the Government, and his first duty is to the council. The Secretary-Treasurer should see to it that he serves the people who are paying him." (Hon. Lucien Maynard, Minutes of the 1937 Annual Meeting of the AAMD Sec-Treas.)

However, Mr. Lamb's illness and the administrators' requests for financial support from both the provincial government ($300) and the University ($?) seem to have precluded further discussions.

Mr. David Gardiner, in a history of the rural administrators' association written in 1959, noted the difficulties in developing a course in these early years. [We] "had to take serious thoughts of the financial cost and the ability of those concerned with it, to pay." "Commercial correspondence schools did not have a course that would fit our needs at a price that we felt our members could afford to pay." "All universities contacted had a minimum admission requirement of Senior Matriculation or better...." In the absence of a formal course, rural administrators nonetheless had the support of the Hail Insurance Board, the AAMD "and lastly, but not least, our perennial friends and instructors, the Deputy Ministers of Municipal Affairs and the various members of the Departmental staff." Mr Gardiner also noted that in these early years there were some attempts to get meetings of rural administrators going on a local level.

An Idea From Manitoba

In early 1937, the Secretary of the Manitoba Municipal Association spoke at the AAMD Convention. His references to a short course put on by the Department of Extension of the University of Manitoba were of considerable interest to the Alberta rural administrators. They obtained transcripts of the Manitoba course and contacted the Department of Extension at the University of Alberta. Mr. Donald Cameron, the current head of the department, was most helpful. At their June 1937 annual meeting the President of the AAMD Secretary-Treasurers noted:

> "We watch more or less the other provinces and they watch us. We notice in Manitoba they are opening a training school for municipal men. This is worth watching. They tell me they are going to adopt some of Alberta's plans." [The course in Manitoba, begun in 1937, was interrupted in the war years and resumed in 1951.]

The "plans" referred to, undoubtedly, were influenced by Donald Cameron for he also spoke at this 1937 annual meeting. His topic was "Adult Education."

It should be interjected that the task of the rural administrator in the 1930's was not an easy one. As Reeve Campbell of M.D. of Evergreen #427 noted at that 1937 convention held at All Saints Parish Hall in Edmonton:

> "I am sorry to know that continuous years at your very difficult work has brought about a breakdown of health for many secretaries.... I can only hope that you will be assisted by the Department of Municipal Affairs to standardize and simplify...."

1939
"In bringing together for a few days of lectures and discussions those men whose training and experience qualify them to speak with authority in their respective fields, a fine opportunity will be provided for interested officials to gain new knowledge concerning legal, financial, and administrative and social phases of municipal administration. It is in the interests of higher standards and more efficient administration that this course is offered." (Donald Cameron as quoted from a presentation by Mr. Gardiner in the 1959 Proceedings)

1939
"If our lives are governed by the true spirit of democracy we will not fail to do our part, small though it may seem to be, in the struggle to bring that time close when every man can say 'The world is my Country and all mankind my brother.'" (Paul Farnalls, President of the AAMD, 1939 Proceedings, p. 59)

Course Approved

Approval of the idea of a refresher course was granted at the 1938 AAMD convention. In the initial planning, it was designed to extend from noon Monday to Friday evening. Room and board was to be made available at a cost of $2.50 per day. A banquet in mid-week was also proposed.

1939 and the "First Annual"

The first Refresher Course in Municipal Administration was held on the campus of the University of Alberta on June 12 - 14, 1939. It had been decided to limit the course to three days given the difficult economic times. Significantly, the course was open to:

> All Secretary-Treasurers and officials of rural and urban municipalities in the province together with Trustees and secretaries of school districts and interested citizens.

There were "97 regular members" present with an "average" attendance of 115, most representing rural governments.

In his welcoming remarks Donald Cameron acknowledged the "arduous" task of local officials and the need for the "advice and counsel of the best authorities on municipal government."

Presenters included five university professors (soils, agriculture, economics, accountancy and political economy and the Registrar), government officials (field crops commissioner, public health, municipal affairs and public welfare), local government practitioners (the city solicitor and a city commissioner from the City of Edmonton, a councillor from Vegreville), and local experts in law and local government. John E. Brownlee, solicitor to the AAMD, represented the legal area starting a long tradition of Brownlee participation.

Unlike today there were no coffee breaks in those days. The sessions ran from 9 till noon and 2 to 5. The Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Association was held in Convocation Hall on the University of Alberta campus on the second day of the course. Notice of the Convention indicated it would be "curtailed due to the fact that some of the subjects usually taken care of at the convention will be the subject matter at the Refresher Course." A closing banquet was held at the Corona Hotel in downtown Edmonton.

The minutes for the 1939 MRC run for 103 legal size pages.

The earliest group photograph of MRC participants. Taken from in front of the Medical Building, U. of A. Campus, Edmonton. Donald Cameron is at the left of the front row.
Photo: University of Alberta Archives

The 1940s

1940

"In response to a request from the Association of Municipal District Secretary-Treasurers, a three day Refresher Course in Municipal Administration was held at the University in June. The initial course was attended by over 100 secretaries, councilors, school trustees and others, and marked the beginning of what promises to be an important service to those engaged in the administrative tasks of local self government. At the close of the course there was a unanimous request that it become a permanent institution." (Donald Cameron, Department of Extension Annual Report, 1940, p. 7)

1941

"I hope you find it a good holiday and incidentally you may find something of value here and there which you can take back with you.... While I have to speak to you for two hours on problems of municipal legislation, Mr. Soutter talked for three hours this morning." (Mr. J. E. Brownlee, K.C., p. 54, 1941 Proceedings) [Some holiday! This was before coffee breaks had been invented.]

In developing the material for a history of MRC there are two areas upon which one might focus. The first relates to the speakers, course content and group discussions. The second focus would be matters discussed at the conventions or annual meetings of the Association (s).

As one follows the presentations, the questions and the debates, it is evident that MRC has been a focal point in the professional development of municipal administrators in Alberta, especially those serving rural municipalities. The quality of the presentations has been high and those in attendance eager to learn in order to ensure their municipality received good value for the time and money invested.

The minutes of the annual meetings bring in other dimensions such as the registration of the Association as a society and the desire for pension, group insurance and health and accident benefits. Another frequent issue in the annual meetings was the matter of formal recognition of the position of secretary-treasurer. The agenda for the 1941 meeting, for example, had an item respecting a "standard of efficiency and legislation under which an examination and legislation for the position of Secretary-Treasurer shall be determined."

The annual meeting was the forum for discussion on changes to the format of MRC such as location, date, topic areas, and desired background or experience of the presenters.

One of the few tensions that surfaced on occasion was the degree to which the Association should debate resolutions pertaining to provincial practice or legislation. While the members generally preferred not to enter this arena (it was a matter, some suggested, for the local elected officials group) some resolutions were passed for forwarding to the province through the AAMD.

Although MRC was open to urban and rural administrators and elected officials from the beginning, it remained for many years a drawing card for only the rural secretary-treasurer, that is, the senior administrative official of the municipality. MRC was opened to assistant secretary-treasurers with the amalgamations of 1944. The vast majority of the administrators found MRC a "must attend" item on their agenda because it created a friendly community in which they could freely discuss their actions, concerns and plans.

Greater Involvement of Practitioners

Some patterns established for the Refresher Course in 1939 were continued for many years such as welcoming addresses by the Department of Extension, the Department of Municipal Affairs and the President of the "parent" organization, the AAMD. However, the considerable involvement of professors declined in the next several years. In 1940, a panel of speakers from Municipal Affairs led by the Deputy Minister, Mr. A. Soutter, was added to the program. The annual meeting of the Association was shifted to the morning of the second day with the afternoon free for meetings with Department officials. In 1941, the course was shortened to 2 1/2 days and, in 1944, secretary-treasurers began to be listed in the program as presenters. Practitioners making presentations in 1944 and 1945 included W. F. Broadstock (Jasper Place), H. U. Taylor (Gilt Edge), D. D. McQueen (Vulcan), A. Walters (Sturgeon), F. J. Ewing (Serviceberry), and M. T. Nemirsky (Lamont).

For the first eleven years the courses were held in the Medical Building and/or Convocation Hall on the University of Alberta campus. Accommodation was based at St. Stephen's College, also on campus, although Alan Brownlee noted in 1945 that those attending were "billeted around town

1942
"It is almost twenty years since I first saw a set of municipal books. The books which I first saw are almost identical with those which are being maintained today. From this fact alone I submit that the municipal bookkeeping system stands condemned. Very few lumber companies...are maintaining the same type of books. The tax roll is an anachronism." (Francis Winspear, Professor and Accountant, p. 32, 1942 Proceedings)

1943
"I should like to convey to Mr. Maynard now when he is leaving this chair to take another portfolio in the Government, our sincere appreciation and thanks for his activities, and for his intense interest in our organization. I can assure you the interest has been very fine indeed." (Chairman's introduction, 1943 Proceedings)

1944
"The splendid services Mr. Brownlee gives are worth ten or even 50 times the money we are paying him." (President AAMD Sec-Treas. , 1944 Proceedings, p. 4)

1945
"While you people were one of the early short course groups coming to the university, one of a relatively select group, the idea seems to be catching hold rather rapidly now. Last year, counting the courses put on here and at different points in the province, the university organized 18 different courses and conferences." (Donald Cameron, 1945 Proceedings)

instead of having to stay at hotels so that the [wartime] order applying to restrictions on conventions and hotels has not been made to apply to your case".

A common feature of the Course in these and later years was greetings brought by fraternal delegates from the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and often British Columbia.

In 1942, the Course was shifted from a Monday to Wednesday period to Wednesday to Friday or Saturday "owing to the Sunday closing of service stations." Also in 1942, at the Association's annual general meeting, it was directed that incorporation be sought under the Societies Act. Superannuation (pensions) and group insurance were invariably on the annual meeting agendas. In 1944 there was an added concern about their reduced numbers (from 110 in 1943 to 60 in 1944) as a result of legislation that had consolidated rural municipalities from 133 in 1942 to 60 in 1944.

One of the common concerns in these years was the municipal budget. As Mr. Sputter noted, "There is not much sense in drawing up a budget and then ignoring it. A number do this," he concluded. However, as one secretary-treasurer retorted: "If your council is anything like mine nine-tenths of the work is wasted every year."

The first "generic" course, "Effective Public Speaking," was offered in 1945 by A. E. Ottewell, the Registrar at the University of Alberta. Starting that year and continuing as a tradition, the national anthem was always included either at the opening or the closing of the course.

MRC was considered an important event given the significant role of rural politicians in the political life of the province. The Ministers of the Department of Municipal Affairs (Hon. Lucien Maynard from 1937 to 1943 and Hon. C. E. Gerhart to 1954) always attended to give an opening address.

Indeed, in 1946, Premier E. C. Manning gave a presentation "The New Deal in Dominion-Provincial Relations as it Affects Municipalities."

The speakers were often asked to review the transcripts of the course proceedings prior to publication. Initially priced at $1.25, their price rose to $1.50 by 1948 and $2.50 in 1950.

Wives and Councillors Invited

Social events became an important emphasis in 1946. Secretaries were advised that the banquet "will be a real affair with plenty of entertainment and fun" and to "bring along their ladies to the convention this year." D. D. (Del) McQueen also suggested that secretaries "bring along your Reeve or a couple of the councillors." That year the Association had 53 paid members and 14 associate members.

Notwithstanding the availability of the Refresher Course, education of members was a continuing concern. In 1946, Leonard Van Tighem proposed that "[we] ask the Department of Extension to arrange a reading course in municipal administration and those members desiring to do so could take a voluntary examination on the first day of the next Refresher Course."

In the late 1940s, the traditional banquet continued to be held in the Corona Hotel. It was supported in large part by companies supplying goods and equipment to rural municipalities such as J. D. Adams, Cruikshank Road Machinery, Union Tractor & Equipment, Municipal Supplies, Armco Drainage Co., Industrial & Road Equipment, Concrete Products, Westeel Products, and Co-op Division Alta. Annual grants were also received by the Association from the Department of Municipal Affairs ($250 beginning in 1945) and the AAMD ($75).

1946
"We have come to look upon the Refresher Course in Municipal Administration as one of the most munificent refresher courses that takes place on this campus, because no matter how dry it was before, we can always count on an inch or two of rain while you are here." (Donald Cameron, 1946 Proceedings)

1948
"On a motion of Messrs. Van Tighem and Sharplin the thanks of the Association was expressed to our president Mr. D. D. McQueen, for his action in presenting a Golf Trophy for annual competition to be held at the same time as the Refresher Course and Convention." (p. 20, 1948 Proceedings)

Main Street in Banff in the late 1940's.
Photo: Provincial Archives of Alberta

Legislation a Focus

Presentations in the mid to late 1940s often centered on new or proposed legislation or major issues of the day. In 1947, Dr. Summerville of the provincial government spoke on "Hospital Financing as it Affects Municipalities."

In 1948, J. W. Judge, the Deputy Minister, was a central figure with a major report he had just completed on municipal financing. His paper, entitled "Relation of Education to Taxation," is an excellent history of that subject in Alberta. Hints of the county system adopted in Alberta in 1950 were in the presentation: "It would appear that the school board and the council have many problems which can best be handled by a single jurisdiction." In a related vein, Mr. Wheatley, President of the AAMD, suggested: "...the idea of getting the secretaries of the School Divisions and the secretaries of the M.D.s together is an excellent idea."

A visiting speaker, Mr. Lowther from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in Ottawa, hoped his listeners would not be offended with a suggestion that the Course be made available to urban officials. Mr. Lawrence, president, reiterated the original position of the Association and stated that efforts had been made over the years to include both the school and urban administrators but with little success. Indeed, at the 1948 Course, there was a joint session with the school district and school division secretaries.

The effects of provincial growth were broadly experienced: "Last year 35 of 60 [rural] municipalities depleted their reserves and not for emergencies." This may have been due in part to increasing requisitions from school boards, a 60% increase in one year in one case.

Through the efforts of E. W. (Stutch) Stutchbury, the Alberta Association of Municipal District Secretary-Treasurers was incorporated by private act as a society effective February 21, 1949.

Speakers at the 1949 MRC included the Hon. C. E. Gerhart, A. J. Hamilton (on municipal accounting), Hon. Peter Dawson, Legislature Speaker (on the conduct of meetings), Alan Brownlee, Walter Sharplin of Castor (on short cuts in office procedure) and Judge, Forbes and Heaton from Municipal Affairs. In one session it was determined that bookkeeping machines were in place in 20% of the municipalities present. The banquet was shifted to the MacDonald Hotel where "the delicious dinner was topped off by 'Jonathan's Baked Alaska'."

An index to the first ten years of the Refresher Course prepared by E. W. Stutchbury was published in the Western Municipal News in March, 1950.

In the preamble he suggests that the proceedings "are considered by many to be the outstanding contribution in Canada to Rural Municipal Administration. This is particularly true of the valuable contributions of John E. Brownlee K. C."

A Shift to Banff

In 1949, the participants were advised that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find space at the University of Alberta Campus. Mr. Ewing, the newly elected president of the Association, asked Don Cameron "whether it would be possible to hold it in Banff." He responded positively and said that the facilities were available at moderate cost. Mr. Judge agreed readily and the delegates agreed that the Course be relocated to Banff.

The 1950s

1950
"Our Executive have arranged for you some social activity and I hope that you will go home refreshed from your stay in Banff. No effort has been spared to make the delegates comfortable. Not to be overlooked in this connection is the morning and afternoon break for light refreshments." (Mr. Ewing, President of AAMD Sec-Treas., p. 34, 1950 Proceedings)

1951
"I hope you will discuss the County Act among yourselves. D. D. McQueen and his council of Vulcan County No. 2 are the smoothest operating piece of machinery on the continent." (Hon. C. E. Gerhart, WMN, July, 1951)

1952
"When Reg Lawrence phoned me and told me I was to pinch hit for Mr. Gerhart, I was all puffed up with my own importance. I even challenged my good friends Brad (W. A. Bradbury) and Harry to ask me any questions last night and there was nothing I did not know. This morning I don't know 'from nothing'." (E. W. Stutchbury, Q. C., Sec-Treas. of the M.D. of Westlock,1952 Proceedings)

The concern of the members of AAMDST for some sort of formal recognized course of study came to fruition in this decade. In contrast to the 1920s, Municipal Affairs was now able to provide the funds to begin the program.

The dominance of MRC as the place to learn the current government position and local practice continued. The scheduling of the course, which followed shortly after the spring sitting of the Legislature, reinforced the consideration of legislation affecting municipalities.

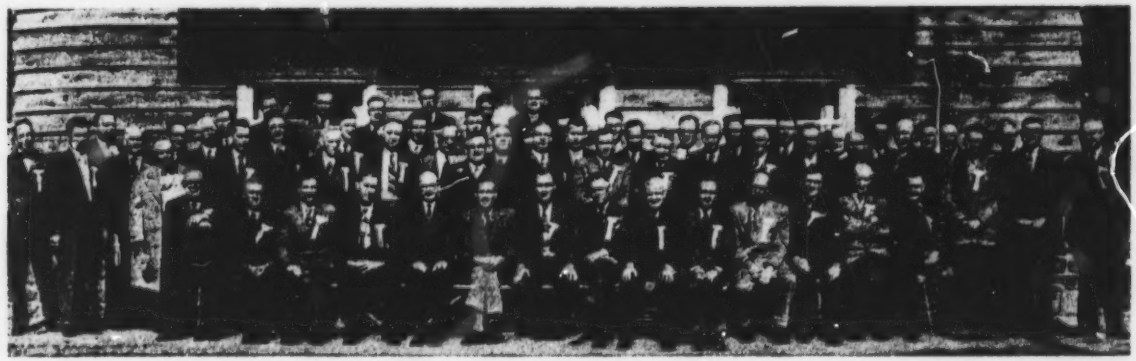
Another factor was the importance of the rural vote and the elected rural municipal official to the provincial party in power. The introductory speeches of MRC may have taken only a part of the first morning but those of the presidents of the AAMD and the ministers of Municipal Affairs often highlighted the key issues or concerns of the day. With municipalities growing rapidly, but the province receiving increasing revenues from development of the resource base, one can appreciate the jousting for funds that took place. The philosophy of the government was presented well. Administrators understood the background to the legislation in addition to the administrative detail.

Finally, there began a small integration of municipal and school administrators through the introduction of the county form of government in 1950 and, in 1956, a joint session where the two courses overlapped by half a day.

County System Promoted

The format of the Course in Banff in 1950 was little different from that of previous years. Presenting were John Brownlee, Hon. C. E. Gerhart (who spoke in support of the county system) and a panel from Municipal Affairs headed by J. W. Judge with J. McGilip, Angus Morrison, Bruce Ramsay and J. M. Forbes. Max Gibson, secretary-treasurer from the M.D. of Argyle, spoke on the subject of business machines and the Addressograph.

The choice of Banff was not unanimous. While the fraternal delegate from British Columbia commented in 1950 "on the very pleasant spot that you have chosen," those attending the annual meeting of the Association nonetheless considered a motion to hold the 1951 Course in Edmonton. The motion lost as did a similar motion in 1951.



One of the three MRC group photographs located during the research. This one is from the July 1950 issue of The Western Municipal News.

1952

"Too often we forget the fundamental concept of government and make people the creatures of institutions rather than institutions the creatures of the people." (Mr E. W. Stuchbury, Q.C., 1952 Proceedings)

1953

"We need efficiency but not at the expense of the human values of local democratic government. Bad local divisions [in England] have led to the movement of local functions up to the central government or the central government has set up its own ad hoc bodies." (Gordon R. Hawkins, Doctoral candidate, Univ. of London, in Alberta studying government and political parties, WMN, Aug. 1953)

1955

"My informant said it was the wettest snow he has ever seen. He said 'Maw melted one bucket of snow and got two buckets of water'." (Hon. E. Hinman, 1955 Proceedings)

Following several years of a Wednesday to noon Saturday schedule MRC was shifted to a Monday to Wednesday period in 1951. The content focused on the new Municipal Assistance Act. Both the Minister of Municipal Affairs and his deputy made major references to it. As a result of a 4 cent tax on gasoline, about $4.7 million was to be distributed unconditionally to municipalities.

Several presentations on civil defense and disaster services were also on the agenda in 1951. While an Air Vice-Marshal and the Provincial Fire Commissioner reiterated the advice of the day respecting preparedness, bomb shelters and locating shops outside the target zones, the response was varied. As E. W. Stutchbury noted, his council's response was "move this be filed."

Other topics on the 1951 program were community planning (Noel Dant), legal problems affecting municipalities (John Brownlee) and industrial assessment (a panel of secretary-treasurers). The participants were dismayed that poor weather did not permit the golf tournament to proceed.

In welcoming the delegates to the 1952 MRC, President Len Van Tighem noted that the cost of the proceedings would have to be increased from $2.50 to $3.75. The main speakers this year were John Brownlee, Al Martin, Director of Planning from Calgary, Hon. Gordon Taylor, Minister of Highways and Bridges, and E. W. Stutchbury, now a Queen's Counsel, who spoke on forms of rural government. J. W. Judge was there with J. M. Forbes and Bruce Ramsay to speak to new legislation and amendments.

In 1953, the Course moved from a Monday to Wednesday to a Tuesday to Thursday time slot. (A quick scan of the dates of MRC in future years indicates a tendency for switching from one part of the week to the other with a movement to a Sunday start in the 1980s.) Otherwise there were the usual addresses of welcome by the University, Donald Cameron, the AAMD, Charles P. Hayes, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Hon. C. E. Gerhart. There were two panel discussions led by administrators, E. W. Stutchbury and W. H. Stringer with the participation of Municipal Affairs' senior staff. Presentations on disease and pest control, public welfare policies and British local government rounded out the Course.

Eric Cornack of the Department of Extension welcomed the delegates in 1954 noting "I am glad to see so many ladies and children with you." John Brownlee made his appearance; the Association had its annual meeting with 31 members attending; the Municipal Affairs team was there with information on the entirely new Municipal District Act and other significant legislative amendments; a secretary-treasurer chaired a panel on assessment; and a representative of the Department of Agriculture came to talk on Agricultural Service Boards.

On occasion, the welcoming addresses were full-blown speeches. In 1955, Charles P. Hayes, President of AAMD, took more than a few minutes to promote the cooperative trading venture upon which the parent organization had embarked. Tires, 2-4-D, anti-freeze and grader blades and a variety of other items could now be purchased through the AAMD. The new Minister of Municipal Affairs, Hon. E. Hinman, combined his greetings with coterminous boundaries, tax collections, municipal overdrafts, office efficiency, public relations, and a few jokes.

MRC Administration

It is not clear from the written records who was primarily responsible for coordinating the Refresher Courses at the Department of Extension during the 1950s. Donald Cameron wrote the introductory statement to the annual proceedings

1956
"In addition to business the Refresher Course and Convention was characterized by a completely carefree and relaxed atmosphere." (Municipal Counsellor, 1956)

1957
"I was disappointed to hear of the amendment that the Minister's approval is no longer necessary for a secretary-treasurer's appointment." (D. McQueen, WMN, October, 1957)

1958
"If it does not apply to municipalities other than rural municipalities, the county system will not be a howling success." (Chas. P. Hayes, AAMD President, 1958 Proceedings)

i recall...
"the first municipal refresher I attended was at Banff in 1958 when the fee was about $3.50. The program was largely a rural secretaries' affair. They organized it and convened all the sessions. I thought it was great. My job was to collect the fees and turn out the lights." (Don Bancroft, Feb. 1988)

up to 1956 and was generally there to welcome the participants. In that year he was appointed to the Senate and his responsibility with the University was now that of Director of the Banff School of Fine Arts. Although Duncan Campbell was appointed Director of the Department of Extension in 1956 and participated in a major session in Banff in 1958, Eric Cormack may have participated more directly in the actual planning of the MRC. In his welcoming address in 1960 he noted that he had been to the last eleven sessions.

Overlap With School Administrators

In the few years prior to 1956, the school and municipal refresher courses were held in consecutive weeks at the Banff School. However that year they were both held in the same week. Also, they overlapped by half a day allowing for a joint session and luncheon. Although there were only seven counties in existence at that time the secretary-treasurers "welcomed the opportunity to familiarize themselves with school procedures."

The entire executive of the parent organization was in attendance in 1956 as were Alan Brownlee, Angus Morrison, now Deputy Minister, senior staff from his Department and fraternal delegates from Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Mr. E. W. Stutchbury, who had recently resigned his position with the M. D. of Westlock, was made an honorary solicitor of the Association at a rate of $1 per year. The Refresher Course now had, on several occasions, two solicitors both presenting interesting and lively sessions.

Government Philosophy Explained

In 1957, Hon. A. J. Hooke, the new Minister of Municipal Affairs, presented his thoughts on the philosophy of government. During the previous session of the legislature, the government had brought in 24 pieces of municipal legislation. He wanted to point out that many of these changes related to the "line of demarcation to what can be rightfully considered municipal responsibility and provincial responsibility."

Deputy Minister Angus Morrison advised the group that a course for municipal secretaries was going to be organized. The rural administrators were not involved in the early development of this university based program and offered their services to the government. On another administrative matter, the allotment of the first three days of the week of the course to the school group with the municipal group having to conclude their sessions on Saturday was not popular. The groups tended to alternate in future years.

Due to the illness of the elder Brownlee, neither was in attendance in 1957. This was the first time in the history of the Course that a Brownlee did not make a presentation. With the exception of speeches by Hon. E. W. Hinman, now the Provincial Treasurer, and C. W. Lester, Director of Surveys, the 1957 Course involved mostly Municipal Affairs staff. Perhaps because there were only a few presentations by secretary-treasurers, some attending the annual meeting suggested that they would prefer, in future years, to have more papers prepared by members of their group. As in previous years, everyone enjoyed a social evening and dance.

In 1958, the Chairman for the welcoming addresses was, as normal, the president of the Association. This year it was the duty of J. Olaf Monsson, secretary-treasurer of the M. D. of Beaver. Others in the welcoming session included Mr. D. Middlemas representing the Banff School, Mr. Potter of the Department of Extension, and Chas. P. Hayes, President of the AAMD.

1958
"We could be wrong, but the relations between the Secretary-Treasurers and officials of the Department of Municipal Affairs struck us as being gratifyingly cordial. Even when there was a difference of opinion, there was a willingness to slug it out with no hint of rancor or antagonism. Friendship, mutual respect and good humor were the order of the day...where the general atmosphere could easily have been otherwise." (Donald Cameron, Municipal Counsellor, July, 1958)

1959
"What Mr. Bancroft has given me has been well worth the price of my visit here" (Mr. Vincent, fraternal delegate from Manitoba, 1959 Proceedings)

1959
"It seems unfortunate that the municipal sessions were attended by so few town secretary-treasurers. With the Certificate Course going so well, isn't it time for all secretary-treasurers to get together?" (Municipal Counsellor, July, 1959, p. 2)

Alan Brownlee was back with a talk on legal problems related to the acquisition and expropriation of land. Other major presenters covered the Hospitalization Act, new legislation and amendments, municipal grants, the Farm Purchase Credit Act, Workmen's Compensation Board Regulations and the Veterans' Act.

Although there were no greater number of administrators on the formal agenda, Guy Tomlinson of Castor thanked the executive for "livening up the course." In part, this may have been due to a wrap-up session by E. W. Stutchbury, on the relationships between the rural district and urban municipality.

A New Direction For Training

Duncan Campbell, Director of the Department of Extension, was present to announce the new program for training for municipal administrators. Designed with the assistance of Professor Eric Hanson and Don Bancroft, Mr. Campbell guided those assembled into some small groups for detailed assessment of the proposal. The group comments, recorded in the Proceedings, were undoubtedly of assistance in refining the subject matter, program emphasis and timing. An Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives from the University, Municipal Affairs, the Secretary-Treasurers' Association, the Appraisal Institute and a representative-at-large, was also being established to give direction to the program.

1958 - A New Era

The appointment of Don Bancroft as lecturer in a new Public Administration Division of the Department of Extension represented a new era for MRC and the training of municipal administrators in Alberta. Mr. Bancroft had been hired to design and administer the new certificate course as well as coordinate the school and municipal Refresher Courses. Duncan Campbell recalls that this kind of fulltime commitment was made possible by Department of Municipal Affairs which provided a grant of $50,000 to $60,000.

For Don Bancroft, the summer of 1958 was given to preparing written material. He had promised to deliver a two-year correspondence course for the municipal secretaries beginning in the fall. At the June 1959 Refresher Course there were 30 people who had successfully completed the first year of the two-year Certificate Course in Municipal Administration. He later completed a course for school secretaries.

There were 71 people in attendance at MRC in 1959, on par with that of the previous decade. Papers were presented again by lawyer Alan Brownlee and accounting professor J. D. Campbell, Don Bancroft (on training and accreditation of secretary-treasurers), and T. D. Bruce (regarding new auditor's financial statements). Mr. D. Gardiner gave a review of the first 20 years of the Refresher Course noting "we have gained a great deal of knowledge of inestimable value ... and a written record] in excess of 2,000 pages of foolscap typewritten material."

There were two panels: one from Municipal Affairs involving Deputy Minister Angus Morrison, and Bruce Laidlaw; and one chaired by E. W. Stutchbury involving four other experienced secretary-treasurers, Harry Scammel (Newell County), Guy Tomilson (Paintearth), Lloyd Williams (Stettler County), and Len Van Tighem (Foothills).

As for the new certificate course, by the fall of 1959 there were two three-year courses in place — a longer municipal one and one for assessors — with 133 and 132 students enrolled respectively. The lessons in the municipal program covered a history of local government, school and hospital affairs in Alberta, provincial statutes and duties of municipal officials and councils, accounting, local government finance, assessment and taxation, municipal functions, elections, office management, and commercial law.

The 1960s

1960

"I know some of the activities within the council room here and the extracurricular activities, so I always look forward to coming back to meet the councillors. As a matter of fact, over the years I feel that I helped contribute to their salaries to some extent. Anybody here from Lacombe? I don't see my old friend here. Lacombe has managed to stay in the black because they were able to dig it out of me." (Eric Cormack, 1960 Proceedings)

The Director of the Banff School of Fine Arts, Donald Cameron, with a portrait presented by the AAMD Secretary-Treasurer, June 1960.
Photo: Alberta Municipal Affairs

Attendance at MRC increased considerably in this decade. While the number of administrators and elected officials from rural municipalities increased by 55 percent (from 80 to 125) in the period 1960 to 1969, the number of urban elected and appointed officials increased almost four-fold (from 30 to 116). Although not officially recorded in the attendance data in Appendix 3, the number of spouses attending was also increasing.

Educational opportunities for administrators now had two components — the Certificate Course and MRC. With a correspondence and seminar series over the winter months and three days in Banff in late May or early June there were few complaints about education from administrators in the 1960s. Separate sessions were now being provided to address special needs of constituencies within the larger body of registrants at MRC, such as elected officials, rural administrators, new administrators or administrators in the smaller municipalities.

In addition to the educational component of MRC, banquets, retirement dinners, graduation awards, annual association meetings and hospitality suites all combined to build a community among urban, rural and provincial administrators and elected municipal and provincial officials of which there was no parallel in the province. Cities were not well represented at the Course.

Course Themes Now Chosen

In 1960, a theme for MRC was selected: the Administration of Roads and Road Allowances. One afternoon was set aside for six discussion groups to explore specific issues such as road acquisition, agreements, assessment and tax rolls.

Another new feature in 1960 was a meeting for the urban representatives and members of Municipal Affairs while those from the rural areas had their annual general meeting. Zak Kay of the Department of Extension was present to make a report on the certificate program.

Registration on June 8, 1960. Eve Bergman, Austin Bridges, Bruce Ramsay and Guy Tomilson standing. Don Bancroft and Zack Kay are seated.
Photo: Alberta Municipal Affairs

In recognition of the contribution made by Donald Cameron since 1937, the AAMD Secretary-Treasurers presented a portrait to the Senator Cameron. The minutes of the 1960 annual meeting note: "Mr. Van Tighem moved a vote of thanks for Dave Gardiner for bringing forward the idea of the portrait and for the able manner in which he carried out the arrangements for it."

Growth in Attendance

Attendance at the course started a climb in 1960 that continued into the late 1970s. There were 86 people present in 1960 and 107 in 1961.

The theme of the 1961 Municipal Refresher Course was "General Administration in Municipal Operations." Senator Cameron was present to greet the delegates as he had been for so many years in the past. Greetings were also brought by J. M. McKay, President of the AAMD, Don Bancroft, and Don Coombs, Superintendent of Banff National Park.

1960
"If any of you have trouble getting your recreational grant from the Department, you just let me know because I know enough about Patrick so that I can talk to him." (Association President Lloyd Williams introducing Hon. A. R. Patrick, 1960 Proceedings)

1961
"Extension? I don't know what it means. As far as you are concerned it means that I am here to serve you, I am here to help you, I will do whatever I can and please call on me when you want assistance." (Donald Bancroft, 1961 Proceedings)

1961
"Would you members of towns and villages that are here today please stand up and let us have a look at you. Holy Mackeral, we are outnumbered!" (Mr. Lloyd Williams, President of AAMD Sec-Treas., 1961 Proceedings)

1961
"Good Morning Gentlemen. It always amazes me a little in the morning to see the changes in the faces that were so bright last night." (Guy Tomilson, newly elected President of AAMD Sec-Treas., 1961 Proceedings)

Attendance Marks Broken At Courses

[Herald Banff Bureau]
BANFF — Two record attendances marked this week's courses sponsored by the University of Alberta's department of extension for municipal and school administrations at the Banff School of Fine Arts.

The first course — the 23rd Refresher Course in Municipal Administration — attracted 118 municipal district secretary-treasurers, while the second — the 17th Short Course in School Administration — had 190 school secretary-treasurers attending.

Theme of the municipal course was "general administration," and of the school course, "the moral and ethical positions of elected and appointed school officials."

In both, the important work of the meeting was done by group discussions.

Said Don Bancroft, Edmonton, extension department lecturer in municipal administration, who has been organizing the week-long event for the past three years: "I think more work and better work was done this year than I have known in the past."

OFFICERS ELECTED

During the two meets, officers were elected of the respective associations represented.

Guy Tomilson, Castor, became the new president of the Alberta Association of Municipal District Secretary-Treasurers, succeeding Lloyd Williams, Stettler. Vice-president of the association: James Masson, Red Deer. Directors: North—John Skuba, Smoky Lake; south — Roy Wallman, Foremost. Gordon King, Three Hills, was re-appointed secretary-treasurer.

New president of the Alberta School Secretary-Treasurers' Association is Alex Shand, Medicine Hat. He succeeds Edward Borth, Killam. Vice-president of the association is Peter Shavchook, Two Hills, and the directors are: North — Tom Meen, Edmonton; central — Roy White, Ponoka; south — Robert Sackley, Cardston.

An article from the Calgary Herald following the 1961 Municipal and School administration courses.

Angus Morrison was present to lead the Department's team on new legislation and amendments. He also referred to a matter common for decades — a Secretaries' Superannuation plan. It was "being delayed for an actuarial survey with a view to combining with school secretaries or all coming under the Public Service Pension Plan."

Given the previous year's success with the discussion group approach, there were four this year. Secretary-treasurers were involved as discussion leaders and as recorders. Summaries of the group sessions were presented at a plenary session.

Urban secretaries again had their meeting with Municipal Affairs. In a follow-up from last year's discussions, Harry May (Village of Crossfield) indicated he had organized a meeting of urban municipalities in his region. "It was so successful that the meeting will be repeated this year." Mr. May thought that as many as six such zones could be organized.

MRC provided an opportunity to acknowledge those taking the Municipal Administration Course: in 1961, 102 people had passed their courses that year and 64 received their certificates.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs, Hon. A. (Alf) J. Hooke, was banquet speaker. In addition to covering some topical municipal matters he dealt with financial policy and the money system.

In 1962, there was again a large increase in attendance. With approximately 50 secretaries and councillors from urban municipalities, spouses and guests, over 200 people took part in the activities. The theme for the Course was labor relations. For the first time it was sponsored by an additional group, the Urban Secretary-Treasurers' Association of Alberta.

The format this year reverted to speakers, excluding group discussions. Don Bancroft, ever eager to ensure the Course fitted the needs of participants, also invited comments on such ideas as developing a closer relationship between the Refresher and Certificate courses and combining the school business official and municipal administrator courses.

1962

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. ...My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

"Whenever we visit Banff, the beautiful words of the Psalmist spring readily to mind. No doubt each of us has his own reaction to mountain scenery, but we believe 'uplifting' describes one of the more common experiences." (Mr. R. A. Cantelon, Editor of the Municipal Counsellor, July, 1962, p. 2)

1962

"Another thing: town or village secretaries, more often alone in the their offices, find it difficult to close up...even for three days." (Municipal Counsellor, July, 1962)

1963

"It is becoming increasingly difficult to program for the different interests and needs of such a large group, and difficult too, to subdivide the delegate body for small group activities." (Municipal Counsellor, July, 1963)

Chalets of the Banff School on the slopes of Tunnel Mountain, 1963.
Photo: Alberta Municipal Affairs

Regarding pensions, Mr. Morrison noted that the Local Authorities Pension Act was now in place and regulations were being drafted. In his words, it was "a tremendous step forward." The rural administrators had certainly been working for benefits in this area for a long time.

Banff School Expands

The facilities in Banff were expanded in 1959 with the completion of a new administration building. In welcoming delegates to the Banff School in 1962, Don Becker, Assistant Director of the Banff School, noted that of it's one-half million dollar capital budget that year only $20,000 was university money. The 1962 expansion included a new wing providing 46 new bedrooms and 13 classrooms.

Presentations in 1962 involved Stanley Ross (conciliation and arbitration), Morrison, Ramsey and Laidlaw from Municipal Affairs (covering 20 different Acts), P. M. Thompson (negotiating an agreement), Alan Brownlee (pipeline expropriation) and a panel of secretary-treasurers on administration of an agreement. Given the continuing presence of urban delegates, Don Bancroft noted: "We have a problem now of finding suitable subject matter to suit both urban and rural people."

In 1963, the same team was back from Municipal Affairs. In their review of legislation, Bruce Ramsay, Chief Municipal Inspector, indicated that amendments came chiefly from conventions of municipal organizations. The title of Alan Brownlee's talk was "Tax Recovery Bylaws." Joe E. Mulloy, appointed to the staff of the Department of Extension the previous year, "displayed an engaging wit" on the subject of annual financial statements. Ken Taylor was there to speak on farm purchase credit and John Smith spoke on welfare costs. Mr. E. E. Wickens, Secretary to the Public Service Pension Board noted that "many [225] of the councils have made application to bring their employees under the Local Authorities Pension Plan."

The association annual meetings were held on Saturday morning. The urban association agreed to amend its constitution to provide for seven zone or area representatives on its board and planned to do a salary survey.

Attendance in 1963, the 25th Refresher Course, reached 180 delegates and 56 spouses. Del McQueen had been to all 25; Angus Morrison noted he missed only two or three.

The 1962-3 Executive of the Alberta Association of the Municipal District Secretary-Treasurers (now ARMA). Seated (L-R): Jim Masson, Vice President, Lloyd Williams, Past President, Guy Tomilson, President, Gordon King, Secretary-Treasurer.
Standing: Walter Leskiw, John Skuba, Roy Willman, Harry Scammell, Directors.
Photo: John Skuba

1964

"The Refresher Course in Banff is an opportunity...in the midst of some of the most scenery on earth...to brush up on the job and return with new knowledge and enthusiasm." (Mr. Alan M. Brownlee, Municipal Counsellor, July, 1964)

1964 - Taxes A Concern

In his welcoming address in 1964, Senator Cameron noted that a total of 19,078 people had registered for courses at the Banff School throughout 1963.

Don Bancroft referred to the "most gratifying" increase in attendance again (to 225 from 183) but suggested that more accommodations would be needed for the general sessions next year.

The Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs was present with his team of senior executives. Mr. Morrison outlined in some detail the method of determining town and village representations to school committees. He suggested that the 13 municipal districts that had boundaries coterminous with school divisions could readily convert to counties. "I commend it to you." Mr. Isbister reported on the winter works program, a federally sponsored program administered through Municipal Affairs and the municipalities.

The urban and rural sections at the Course split for a few of their own sessions: F. G. Stewart, Deputy Provincial Treasurer, spoke to the urbans on the Municipal Development Loan Act while W. D. Hough of the Workman's Compensation Board was with the rural group.

Property taxes were a major theme this year. There were four panels on this topic consisting of a combination of municipal administrators, staff of Municipal Affairs and the University. In reference to striking a mill rate, a Mr. Jones suggested "Utopia is a district in which municipal, school and hospital boundaries are coterminous."

Speakers in the closing session included T. C. Pocklington, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Alberta, on the topic of democratic theory and Alan Brownlee on "Hold Harmless and Other Agreements."

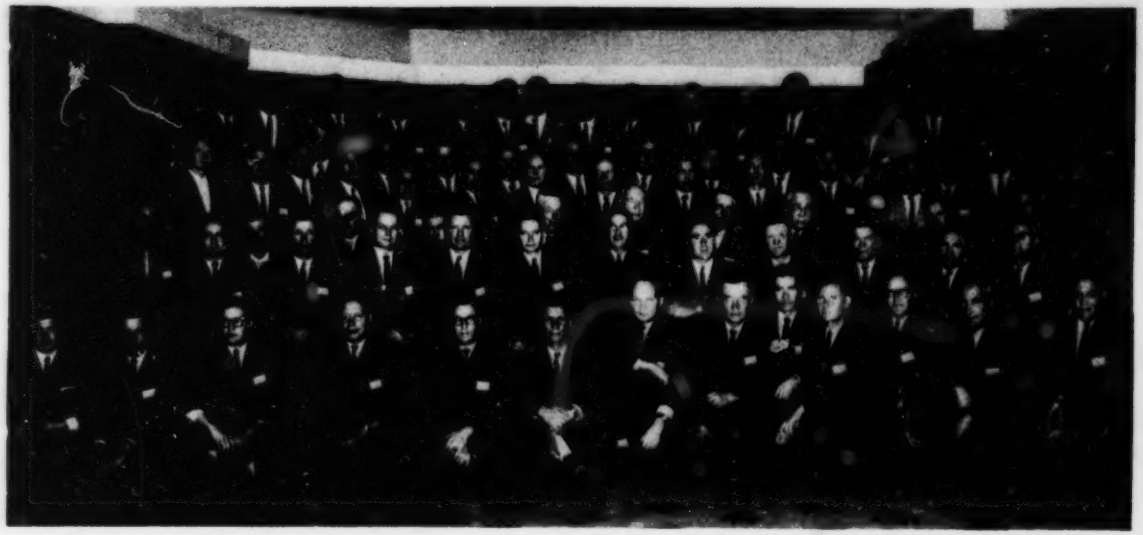
At the annual general meeting of the AAMDST four people were presented with honorary memberships: J. M. McKay, Angus Morrison, Bruce Ramsay, and W. D. (Bill) Isbister. In a discussion period some of the rural administrators felt that the combined group was becoming too large; members wished to keep their identity. The Executive was to meet with Don Bancroft to discuss the matter and bring recommendations forward. The urban administrators directed their executive to "hasten the process of professional status."

Theme Is Planning

The theme of the 1965 Course was urban renewal and planning. Morrison, Laidlaw and Ramsay did their usual summary of legislative amendments with a focus on the new Alberta Housing Act. Others on the planning theme included Alan Brownlee (Municipality's Powers in Planning), John Polonuk (Procedures under the Planning Act) and Ian Morris on the Local Authorities Board.

Problems arising from the differing areas of interest of the rurals and urbans were resolved. It was agreed that both groups would continue to participate in one Course but more opportunity would be provided for separate sessions.

This year the urbans had a panel of four speaking on local traffic control while the panel for the rural group discussed secretary relations to staff, council and the public. The rurals annual meeting had 45 in attendance. The executive was requested to explore the establishment of a minimum standard of qualification for a secretary-treasurer. The urbans had 52 people present. They agreed to seek amendments to the Town and Village Act respecting their security of tenure.



Assembled Registrants of the 1964 Municipal Refresher Course.
Photo: John Skuba

1964
[The Banff School of Fine Arts] "has grown because people find in the Banff setting the gift of beauty and the gift of tranquility. They gain perspective, inspiration and humility, and a sense of human comradeship that is good for the soul." (Donald Cameron, from his Campus in the Clouds as quoted in Municipal Counsellor, July, 1964, p. 2)

1965
"I might first indicate to you that through the years I have had the opportunity of being a lot of places and seeing a lot of things and this morning at breakfast I discovered that I had never seen anything to compare with Lloyd Williams mustache." (Mr. J. M. McKay, President of AAMD Sec-Treas., 1965 Proceedings)

Attendance at the Course was now rising at about 20 percent per year and the auditorium was being used to a greater extent than previously. While much of this increase was due to more councillors attending, they noted that it was not their intention to make it an elected officials course. Planning for the Course remained with the Department of Extension, Municipal Affairs, and the two associations.

The Course in 1965 provided an opportunity to mark the retirement of a secretary-treasurer long associated with municipal government. David N. Gardiner began his municipal career in 1920 and retired as secretary-treasurer of the M. D. of Rocky View No. 44 (45 years!). He was a past president of the AAMDST and had presented a written history of the group in 1959.

The guest speaker for this year's banquet was Professor Tom Powrie who gave a "Whimsical Dissertation of the History of Money." All enjoyed the Louis Trono band which played again for the fourteenth time at the dance which followed.

Space Problem

Although construction was proceeding on additional space at the Banff School, in 1966 there were problems with an insufficient number of bedrooms and parking space. Also, "lapel cards, coffee cups and even chairs [were] at a premium."

Presentations in 1966 were clearly divided into joint, urban and rural sessions. Morrison, Laidlaw, and Ramsay were back as were Alan Brownlee and Joe Mulloy. John Woodruffe came to present a paper on urban renewal. Other topics included the Homeowners Tax Discount, preventive social services, workmen's compensation and the organization of protective services.

1968

"This seems to be a little different morning than usual particularly to those that visited the Rimrock Hotel. Usually I get up in the morning, stretch, look out of the window and say "Good Morning, God." This morning I tried to do the same thing, I got out of bed, looked at my watch and said, "Good God, morning!" (Mr. Skuba, 1968 Proceedings)

1969

"[The new bilingual STOP sign] reminds me of the story of a mouse. He crawled out of his hole and headed for the granary but all of a sudden he saw a great big cat coming after him so he ran back into his hole as fast as he could and sat there shivering and shaking and all of a sudden he heard a dog bark, and he thought , 'Aha, I am going to crawl out and see the cat scamper away from the dog.' So very boldly he came out of the hole and there was no dog there. The cat grabbed him and swallowed him whole and sat there smacking his lips, 'it pays to be bilingual'." (John Skuba, Association President, 1969 Proceedings)

1967 - MGA a Focus

The 1967 Course was sponsored by the same groups as in the past. However the name of the Alberta Association of Municipal District Secretary-Treasurers was now the Alberta Association of County and Municipal District Secretary-Treasurers. It was shortened to the Alberta Rural Administrators' Association in 1972.

A major focus of the 1967 Course was Bill 50, a proposed new Municipal Government Act. Mr. Stan Ross, a major author of the Bill, responded to more than 80 questions posed by a panel of six experienced administrators. A second panel, moderated by Angus Morrison, included Messrs. Ramsay, Isbister, Brownlee and Skuba (Association President from the County of Smoky Lake). Others on the agenda included the Honourable Bob Clark of the Department of Youth and Alan Brownlee on "cases of interest."

The rural and urban groups again had their own sessions: the rurals concentrated on payroll procedures led by a panel of four while the urbans had Bob Orysiuk on the subject of housing.

Del McQueen, a past president of the Secretary-Treasurers Association, was honored upon his retirement in 1967 after 41 years in municipal administration in the Vulcan area.

More MGA

Attendance at the 1968 Course was especially strong (266 delegates and 120 spouses). This was probably due to the planned discussion of Bill 23, a revised version of the municipal legislation presented the previous year. "Mimeographed" copies where provided to all delegates. This year, Bill Isbister, the other main author, handled the task of explaining the Bill.

Also on the agenda were a panel of four administrators on filing and record keeping, Les Usher from the Department of Youth, Elsie McFarland from the U. of A. on recreation grants and Angus Morrison on public housing. As in the past, Alan Brownlee and a panel of Isbister, Ramsay and Laidlaw dealt with law and legislation.

It was noted in the 1968 Minutes that donations were no longer solicited from suppliers. Those attending were reminded that the golf tournament, which had interested only seven participants the previous year, would be played later that month in Red Deer.

The 1969 Course was typical in format to previous years: a panel from Municipal Affairs explaining amendments and new legislation affecting municipalities, Alan Brownlee again on legal matters, E. E. Wicken on superannuation and M. L. Arcand on new social service programs.

Minutes of the annual meetings indicate that in the past year it cost $998.71 to print 267 copies of the proceedings and that $1,000 was collected from the sale and distribution of 265 copies. The rurals had 50 people at their meeting while the urbans had 83 of their 144 members present.

The 1970s

1970
"There is growing concern among some rural municipal secretary-treasurers that the refresher course, which they began in 1939, is passing out of their control." (Don Bancroft's 1970 Annual Report)

1971
"Here I was, the first ever E. A. [executive assistant] to a Minister of Municipal Affairs, the young pip-squeak, trying to deliver the Minister's speech in an authoritative way and hoping I wouldn't say anything to get Angus, Bill or Bruce mad." (Tom Forgrave, Feb. 1988)

With a continuing increase in attendance the assumption might be that all was well with the MRC. However, while decisions on session topics and speakers were excellent with fine tuning where changes seemed necessary, the desire by administrators for professional standards and accreditation was not being met. Further, their desire for "education content" at MRC was being frustrated by the continuing growth in the attendance of elected people.

Don Bancroft, who concluded 16 years of service in 1974, was followed for about a year by Merrill Macdonald. Edd LeSage took over in 1976 and quickly embarked on major study of the educational needs of municipal administrators in Alberta. He recalls that the analysis, which included visits to other provinces, "clearly pointed to a differentiated local government administrator market."

The changes in the 1977 MRC were not sufficient for the membership. Responding to a request for comments, the County of Lethbridge statements made (October 13, 1977) to the ARMAA executive were representative of administrator concerns: There were too many people, not enough sessions for councillors, a need to provide for groups based on the size of the municipality, a more serious commitment to education content, short courses, input from other administrators and no necessity for ministerial attendance. Finally, the county respondent suggested the daily schedule should start earlier and end earlier "thus giving administrators a chance to golf, etc., before the evening meal." The subsequent decision to separate the appointed and elected participants was seen as a necessary one if MRC were to be retained as a meaningful educational experience.

Concurrent Sessions

To accommodate the growing diversity of delegate interest, the 1970 program provided for six concurrent sessions. Reports to a plenary session were made. Morrison, Laidlaw, Ramsay and Brownlee were back. According to the proceedings documents, Don Cameron, who had retired from the Banff School in 1969, also returned for the last time, following a year or two absence because of heavy Senate responsibilities.

In this year a survey of educational and vocational interests of the secretaries was conducted. The need for group sessions focused on specific needs was confirmed. As Don Bancroft noted in his annual report, "small village secretaries may prefer to avoid discussions dominated by highly trained and specialized personnel of larger municipalities."

In 1971, Morrison, Ramsay, Laidlaw and Brownlee again returned. Topics covered included Workmen's Compensation Board, accounting classifications, the grid road system and micro filming. Tom Forgrave, Executive Assistant to Fred Colburne, attended for the first time and read the Minister's speech. Some sessions were held for the first time in the Eric Harvie Theatre and the Margaret Greenham Complex.

More People, More Sessions

The welcoming addresses in 1972 were made by the Associations, Extension, the Banff School (Dr. D. R. S. Leighton) and the Minister, now Hon. D. J. Russell. The programs, as in the last few years, were now somewhat more extensive with a variety of plenary and group sessions. Jim Masson and two other administrators headed a panel on program accounting and budgeting. Eve Bergman presented a history of the rural Association. Recreation agreements continued as a topic of interest and refuse disposal was on the

I recall...
"the 1960s and early 1970s when Thomas Mathias Anton, secretary-treasurer of the Town of Taber, would delight in getting the piano going in one of the old chalets that would result in a sing-song that I am sure could be heard throughout the valley. Tom retired in 1976 and still lives in Taber." (Ed Thomlinson, Feb. 1988)

1972
"Most people thought they had a pretty good session. You learn, you have fun, you get a chance to interchange with colleagues and you have an opportunity to identify with a group of people who are involved in running this province as provincial administrators." (Bob Christie reporting on an evaluation of participants' views on the Course, 1972 Proceedings)

agenda for the first time. Don Bancroft noted in his annual report that there were now 100 people enrolled in the Local Government and Municipal Planning certificate courses and 113 in Assessment.

Although the previous year's golf tournament was not well attended, another was scheduled for June 23. The minutes of the rural group indicate there was some discussion on moving the Course to "alternating cities." The urbans wanted to pursue a policy leading to certification and agreed that the courses be moved to colleges to facilitate shorter mileage trips.

New DMA Team

The 35th Annual in 1973 was attended by a new team from Municipal Affairs: Bill Isbister, Jack Fleming, who had been appointed to head the Inspection Branch in 1972, and Lloyd St. John. All of the municipal inspectors were present at the Course this year. Alan Brownlee was absent this year but was back the next. The Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Public Works spoke on issues in their areas. There were both general and group sessions with the latter involving administrators or Department staff.

At the rurals' annual meeting Don Bancroft spoke on the status of accreditation in other provinces. Members agreed to refer the matter for further study. They also requested that next year's banquet be cancelled in favour of a social evening and dance.

At the annual meeting of the Alberta Urban Municipal Administrators Association, the Association executive reported on discussions with NAIT. These meetings pointed to a possibility, which was subsequently implemented, of adding three courses on local government to a two-year course in management.

No Proceedings After 1973

Denis Lenihan volunteered to do a study of a plan to reduce the size of the Proceedings. While the minutes do not indicate any discussion of the matter in 1974, in 1975 they state "It was agreed there was no need to print a summary of the program's proceedings or addresses." After 35 years of formal records of speeches and activities pertaining to local government in Alberta, the proceedings of 1973 were to be the last. It was a resource that was being used less frequently by administrators of the day.

The urban presence at the Course continued to increase through this period. In 1974 there were 142 urban as compared to 64 rural administrators. However, rural councillors still exceeded the urban — 74 compared to 38. Inasmuch as the rural group had decided to withdraw support of the banquet, attendance at this function in 1974 was down to about 200 people.

Course content in 1974 included the Minister, the Deputy Minister and his staff covering the usual areas. Ron Ahlstrom of the Municipal Inspection Branch made the presentation on legislation. Alan Brownlee was back with notes on expropriations. Evaluations of the program indicated that the small group workshop format was well received by the delegates.

1975
"The focus of the program is to be on the needs and interests of appointed administrators. Council members are welcome to attend." (Minutes of the Planning Committee, Feb. 21, 1975)

1977
"...a lack of time is seen as their [the administrators'] largest barrier to becoming involved in a training course, making the short course mode highly preferred." (Alberta Municipal Administrators Study, 1977, p. 5.15)

Record Attendance

Attendance in 1975 reached a record of some 350 appointed and elected officials. The next two years maintained this level. The opening portion of the 1975 Course was consistent with that of previous years. The large number of delegates, however, led the program committee to design a series of six workshops to be repeated three times during the Course. The topics were the Local Authorities Board, recreation grants, financial information systems, tax abatement, and employee associations and labor relations. The last of these six was presented by J. Merrill McDonald, an Associate Professor in the Department of Extension. He temporarily acted in the position of Coordinator of the MRC program while a replacement for Don Bancroft was being hired. The Land Use Forum and the proposed new Planning Act were topics of plenary sessions.

In the annual meetings, administrators continued to indicate needs for training and upgrading. There was increasing support for a process of accreditation and registration.

Randall Ivany, Provincial Ombudsman, spoke at the banquet of the urban group while the rural administrators and councillors had a retirement dinner in downtown Banff.

Space was becoming a critical problem. With the total registration of the municipal program in the vicinity of 400 people and 450 for the school program, both events taking place in the same week, one can understand the Banff School indicating that some restrictions would be needed. There was also, one suspects, considerable pressure on those running the course in the Department of Extension regarding administrative details.

The Louis Trono Band playing for the 1975 dance.
Photo: Alberta Municipal Affairs

Short Courses Begin

A new administrator of the program within the Department of Extension, Edd LeSage, came on staff in the spring of 1975. The course format for the first course he directed, 1976, was similar to that of the previous year with welcoming addresses, some plenary sessions, five recurring group sessions and a speech by the new minister, the Honourable Dick Johnson. Two new innovations were added: the AUMA and ARMAA had their own "think tank" sessions and, more significantly, a one day short course on Personnel Administration was run concurrently with other activities on the Tuesday. The short course had 35 registrants.

The golf tournaments in 1975 and 1976, organized by Ed Koberstein of the County of Lacombe, both took place in Lacombe.

1977
[The presence of elected people] "prejudiced the development of programs.... on management and administration...and brought too much politics into the classrooms." (Minutes of the Planning Committee, Nov. 3, 1977)

1977
"To provide learning activities and social experiences which will transfer new information, ideas and techniques to municipal administrators thereby improving the individual administrator's ability to perform duties as well as improving the overall stature of the profession." (Purpose of the Refresher Course, Minutes, Nov. 3, 1977)

Brownlee's Last

In 1977 the usual welcoming addresses opened the Course; there were two major plenary talks: one by Jacques Perrault, City Manager, Quebec City, and one by Alan Brownlee on the new Planning Act. This was to be Mr. Brownlee's last presentation. Either he or his father, John, had attended all the Courses between 1939 and 1977 save two, those of 1957 and 1975 - 37 out of 39!

Other regular features in 1977 included the holding of the annual meetings of the two associations and the workshop format. This year there were six workshops covering the topics of elections, inspections, needs of village secretaries, metric conversion, and applied management controls. A new feature was the presence of 18 people from nine departments of the Provincial government as well as four from Municipal Affairs in order that delegates might "Dialogue with Senior Government."

Alberta Municipal Administration Study

Initiated in May 1976, this extensive study conducted by Edd LeSage and Charles Humphrey of the Faculty of Extension was undertaken to "obtain a clearer understanding of the nature of municipal administration and the educational needs of municipal administrators in Alberta's towns, villages, counties and M. D.'s." Six modes of training were offered in the survey instrument. According to the study, "By far the most appealing mode of training was the seminar or workshop of one to three days in duration."

Major Revision to Traditional Banff Course

A considerable amount of discussion on format and attendance continued. The review by the Course Planning Committee in 1977, which included Chad Warnock representing AUMA, Jack Fleming of Municipal Affairs, Roy Robbins of ARMAA, and Verna Robbs of the Town of Hanna as well as Edd LeSage led to separate events for the elected officials and the administrators.

The 1st Annual Elected Officials Symposium was held at the Banff School on June 4 - 7, 1978, with 240 people attending. The Refresher Course was held on the same dates and location with 231 attending.

The 40th Annual Municipal Refresher Course began on Sunday evening with a presentation by George Cuff on the subject "Today an Administrator, Tomorrow a Dinosaur." A panel consisting of Cuff, David Jones and Len Van Tighem followed. Two two-day short courses were held on the Monday and Tuesday. One was on Administrative Communication by Dr. Jim Beaubien and Karen Caeser. The other, an "Administrator Orientation Program," was led by Jack Fleming and involved Bill Nugent, Frank Colvin, Keith Metcalfe, Bernie Bawol, Len Gurel, Ron Skillings, Chad Warnock, Gordon Stewart and a group of administrators in a mock council meeting.

1978
"I'm sure no one is going to request any copies of it [my presentation] from you anyway! I found Bob Byron's talk most enjoyable and informative. How about asking him for two copies of his talk. Then you'd have something to put in that file - & I'll bet no one will ever know." (a response to the Course administrator by Florence Long of Penhold dated July 6, 1978 to a request for a copy of her paper)

1978
[The mock council meeting involved] "Denis Lenihan as the dominant Mayor, Caroline Bodmar and Marie Chamney as the competent lady councillors, Denis King as the typical, sometimes confused councillor, Jack Sommerville as the late arriving, anti-women's lib, gopher chasing councillor and finally Marlene Hunter as the new nervous administrator." (Municipal Affairs files, 1978)

As a further option there were two one-day courses: budgeting presented by Tom Lauder of Municipal Affairs and cash management presented by Ken Porter. Wednesday morning was reserved for a dialogue session at which representatives of four provincial departments were present.

In 1979 there were five concurrent two-day courses. Jim Beaubien and Karen Caeser returned as well as staff from Municipal Affairs. Also involved were Fred Fisher on personnel management and Stan Juniper on report writing. This year the Department put on two courses, "Management or Chaos" with Dick Nobbs and Bill Fleming and "Administrator Orientation" involving Manny Langman, Gordon Stewart, Bernie Bawol, and Norm Milke. The presentations by the Municipal Affairs staff were assembled into a manual for reference by participants and other municipal staff throughout the province. This manual has since been considerably expanded and updated.

There was a banquet and dance on Friday evening. The course closed on Saturday morning with a plenary session led by Fred Fisher and presenters from B. C. and Saskatchewan on professional development in municipal administration.

Shift in ARMAA Annual Meeting

It had been the tradition since 1939 for the annual meeting of the association of rural administrators to be held in conjunction with the Course. This provided an opportunity for members to discuss a variety of matters such as accreditation, training, honorary and life memberships, the Course, resolutions, zone affairs, relations with other organizations and the location of the next golf tournament.

However, as early as 1974, the Association also held a fall meeting annually in Edmonton. At the meeting in November 1979, Roy Robbins explained some of the problems encountered at the Banff Conference. He felt there was not enough time to discuss Association business and noted the success of the two-day meeting held in Grande Prairie at the end of June. It was agreed that the next annual meeting be held in September, rather than in June, 1980.

The 1980s

1980
"It was a good program, although there were some comments that the association with the Elected Officials Symposium of the last two years was missed." (Municipal Councillor, July/August, 1980)

1980
"[We] have broken some new ground. By combining the planning exercise for the Municipal Refresher Course and the Seminar Series we have moved towards developing a more comprehensive program of continuing professional education for municipal administrators." (Edd LeSage to Planning Committee members, Dec. 16, 1980, Faculty of Extension files)

Six Concurrent Workshops

A sixth concurrent course was added in 1980. In addition to Beaubien and Caeser, the program included Lawrence Tymko on decision making and policy analysis, Michael Park on municipal law, Tom Plunkett on managing change, Cal McGonigle on elections, and staff of the Municipal Inspection and Advisory Services Branch on an orientation for administrators.

Concurrent Workshops Continue

In 1981 the Course opened on Sunday evening with the Annual meeting of the Local Government Administrators' Association and a hospitality get-together.

Six concurrent workshops were again offered, such as Beaubien and Caeser on women in management. Others workshops included Jack Sklofsky on building an effective municipal organization, Roger Cormier on managing time, George Cuff on personnel administration, Michael Park on municipal law and staff of Municipal Affairs with an orientation program for less experienced administrators. These workshops were held on the Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday morning Bill Isbister, who had retired as Deputy Minister in 1980, was speaker in a plenary session on the role of the administrator. There was no banquet.

Project Paragon

One of the needs in the training program of administrators was something for those with some experience. At the March 25, 1981, ARMAA executive meeting Edd LeSage presented "Project Paragon." Building on the "differentiated" needs determined in the 1976 study and the experiences of MRC in the 1977-1981 period, Project Paragon provided for three distinct levels. The proposal sought to provide for the continuing education needs of novices, graduates of the existing Certificate programs as well as those with considerable experience. At this Association's annual meeting in Red Deer in September, 1981, an amended version, "Son of Paragon," was outlined. These reports and ensuing discussions shaped the development of a funding proposal submitted to Advanced Education and Manpower which resulted in funding of approximately $250,000 per year over a five-year period.

Course Extended to Three Days

A one-day extension of the 44th MRC in 1982 provided for one plenary and several small group concurrent speeches. The opening keynote address on the Monday morning was given by Gerald Gall, University of Alberta, on "The Constitution: Implications for Local Governments." A second major address, an update on the Expanded Local Government Program, was given on the Tuesday morning by Edd LeSage. Subjects covered in the one-half day or less concurrent addresses included employee compensation, computers, the Local Authorities Board, trends in rural Alberta and economic development.

I recall...
"in 1981, I was giving a lecture in one of the downstairs rooms in the Max Bell building when, from the backyard woodlot came a small family of white-tailed deer. They were browsing on the lawn as nonchalantly as I was trying to be, but I just could not go on pretending their presence was not distracting me. So, I paused, and the class and I spent a few minutes quietly enjoying a bit of Mother Nature just outside our window. In the years that I've taught, that was the first time my lecture was ever interrupted by a welcome and beautiful event." (Bert Einsiedel, Feb. 1988)

The subjects and presenters of the six major concurrent workshops included: law - Michael Park; stress - Beaubien and Caeser; organizational design - Bert Einsiedel Jr.; personnel - George Cuff; records management - Audrey Murray; and, an orientation program for new administrators by Municipal Affairs staff.

At the banquet on Wednesday evening, graduates of the Certificate program and retiring administrators were acknowledged and tribute paid to Edd LeSage for his work in upgrading educational standards for municipal administrators. This was his last year of direct involvement in the Course as he was about to take an eighteen month sabbatical. The banquet speaker was David Elton of the Canada West Foundation on political and economic development in Western Canada.

Program Assessment

Beginning with Don Bancroft in 1958, and thereafter with increasing rigor, formal assessments of the course content, the presenters and the facilities were maintained. Comments, such as those by participants in 1981 — "fantastic", "need more support material", "more participation by enrollees", "do it again", "want more help in actually drafting by-laws", and "some read their material - boring" — assisted the Planning Committee in improving or changing the Course content.

A New Program Director

One of the presenters in the May 1982 Course, Dr. Albert A. (Bert) Einsiedel Jr., was appointed Director of Local Government Studies and Associate Professor of Extension following a national competition. He took over from Edd LeSage in September 1982. In a pattern reminiscent of his predecessor, Bert Einsiedel undertook a survey of training needs. The study was commissioned by the Inter-Agency Planning Branch of Municipal Affairs with a focus on the need for training of elected and appointed officials in making planning decisions. It is interesting to note that in respect to a question on the preferred program format, the 153 respondents indicated a preference for a short course of one to three days.

Another Half Day Added

In response to participant comments, the Course was extended in 1983. It opened on the Sunday evening with the LGAA annual meeting and social and concluded on Thursday noon.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Archie Grover, Deputy Minister, and Tom Forgrave, Assistant Deputy Minister. They reviewed legislation introduced in the spring sitting of the Legislature — a recurring topic in most of the previous years. Given the poor economic conditions, restraint was the subject of two other plenary addresses.
A final plenary dealt with council-staff communication. One afternoon was set aside for five concurrent presentations: election procedures, employee relations, role of administrator, council-administrator relations and new assessment procedures.

Six two-day workshops, the core elements of MRC, were again offered. Many of the presenters from the previous years returned - Beaubien and Caeser, Park, Murray, Municipal Inspection Services and a team of Cuff, Sklofsky and Einsiedel. One addition was Peter Fernandes on financial planning and control.

I attended...
"because of the interaction between the course participants. It enables us to meet administrators who have similar problems in their municipalities. Often course discussions have brought out the solutions that have been found by another municipality and could be used by others." (Daphne Turner, Carstairs, Feb. 1988)

My hope...
"There is ample evidence of the interest in and support for a much more rigorous education program possibly leading to a post graduate level. I will be delighted when this takes place." (Jack Fleming, Feb. 1988)

Three Tiers of Training

At the September, 1983, annual meeting of ARMAA, a concept of three tiers of professional training was discussed. This was reflected in some changes in the 1984 Refresher Course through the addition of the Senior Executive Fellows Program. That is, the Sunday evening to Wednesday noon pattern for the Course continued in 1984 as previously but two concurrent, inaugural "Seniors" workshops began on the Tuesday and continued until Friday noon.

The two plenary sessions in 1984 involved Albert Einsiedel Jr. speaking on professional development in local government and a panel, consisting of Mark Betteridge, Dale Clark, Archie Grover, David Jones, and Edd LeSage, which examined the role of the administrator.

The two-day concurrent workshops, of which there were only five this year, were on stress (Beaubien and Caeser), contract law (Park) management information systems (Tom Adams), negotiating and conflict resolution (William H. Taylor), and an orientation for novice administrators. This latter session by Municipal Affairs was based on a mock council meeting with the script prepared by Doug McLellan and was very well received.

The first class of the Senior Executive Fellows Program, 1984.
Photo: University of Alberta

Walter Luyendyk (personnel management) and Bob Iverson (leadership, decision making and management styles) presented the first Seniors workshops.

Shorter in 1985

Many of the elements of the 1984 Course were used in 1985. However, the keynote address and other plenary sessions were dropped. Following some opening remarks and greetings five concurrent workshops were begun as were the two Senior workshops. The former ones, which concluded on Wednesday noon, had a registration fee of $150. They covered council-administrator interaction (Municipal Affairs), basic management for municipalities (Municipal Affairs), communication (Beaubien and Caeser, their seventh visit), creative negotiating (William H. Taylor), and employment law (Park). The Senior workshops, which concluded on Thursday noon and cost $285, had Gerald Gall on administrative law and Amelia Armit on policy development and program evaluation. The banquet was on the Monday evening with Rodney Schneck as speaker.

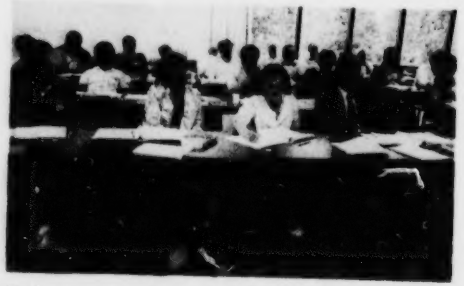
Merger With School Business Officials

The first refresher course in school administration was held at the University of Alberta campus in 1945. The idea for the course came from the one in place for municipal officials. It has been held continuously since then at a location, format and time somewhat paralleling the "original." For example, in 1945, the school course was held on Monday to Wednesday while the municipal one

Municipal Refresher Course participants at the 1986 Banquet.
Photo: University of Alberta

1986

[The elections workshop] "made a rather dull procedure most interesting and entertaining, even for those of us who have been through it on numerous occasions." (Participant comment on course evaluation)



Senior Executive Fellows Class listening to Jack Mason, 1987.
Photo: University of Alberta

was on Wednesday to Friday. The Department of Extension took primary responsibility for the course in cooperation with the Alberta School Trustees Association and the then Alberta Divisional Secretaries' Association.

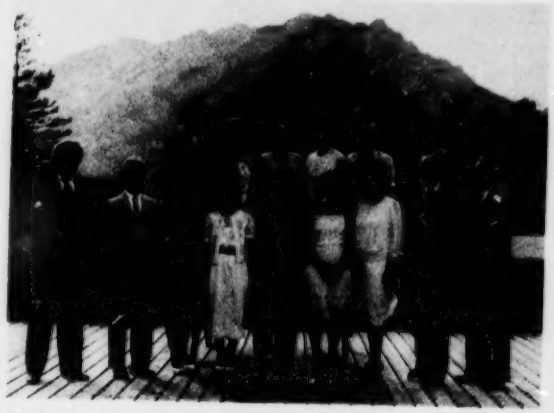
In 1985, the School Business Officials Short Course was held in Banff in September. At the municipal group's Planning Committee meeting in November, 1985, it was proposed that the two courses share the same facility and time in June, 1986. This was agreed although the county people expressed concern that too many people would be out of the office at one time. Separate programs would continue to be published.

Those attending the 1986 Course had the option of five short courses, two Citation workshops or two Seniors workshops. As it was an election year one of the popular short courses was put on by Municipal Affairs on election procedures. Other short courses covered school business administration, stress and time management, employment law and privatization. The Citation courses included municipal recreation administration and school budgeting while the Seniors workshops dealt with public finance and budgeting and management of information systems. Mike Ozerkevich, then Deputy Minister for Social Services, spoke on "The Passion for Excellence" during the plenary session and Clare Drake, coach of the University of Alberta's Golden Bears, was the banquet speaker.

Two hundred and sixty-three people attended of which 162 were municipal administrators. Course evaluations indicated there was general although not unanimous support for the merger of the school business officials' and municipal administrators' conferences.

The combined attendance in 1987 declined from 263 the previous year to 227 people with 160 from municipal, 35 from county and 32 from school jurisdictions. The program opened with the Senior's workshop on Sunday, June 7 at 8:30 a.m. and a hospitality get-together on Sunday evening. On Monday morning the plenary session featured Judith Anderson providing an update on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The five concurrent workshops, which ran until Wednesday noon, included one each by Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta Education for newly appointed administrators, developing a five-year capital budget by Peter Fernandes, project management by Einsiedel and legal drafting by Michael Park. The Citation workshop for municipal officials was on the assessment and taxation roll (Bernie Bawol) while the one for school administrators was on school budgeting. Senior administrators had an option between "The Government Context" with Jack Mason and leadership and management styles with Ray Rasmussen.



Graduates of the certificate program in June 1986.
Photo: University of Alberta

My hope...
"is that these courses will continue and provide municipal secretaries with information on the varied duties and responsibilities that they face daily, and provide them with a know-how in carrying them out." (John Skuba, Feb. 1988)

I attended...
"because in those earlier days it was the only forum available to get together with other municipal administrators in a learning situation. We learned a lot from each other." (Jim Masson, Feb. 1988)

My hope...
"is that the program will continue to evolve as unique educational convocation in which matters salient to the development of the municipal administration profession are addressed." (Edd LeSage, Feb. 1988)

Plans for 1988

Styled in the pattern of the last few years, MRC for 1988 will begin on Sunday, June 5 with two concurrent courses applicable to the Seniors certificate. John Miller, who teaches Local Government Administration and Business and Communication at NAIT, will be heading the session Communications and Community Relations. Gerald Gall, a law professor at the University of Alberta, will return to teach administrative law.

The opening plenary speaker on Monday morning will feature Terrance White, Dean of Arts of the University of Alberta and President - elect of Brock University in St. Catherines, Ontario. His topic is societal change and some implications for public sector managers. In the afternoon, five general interest workshops and two Citation workshops will commence. Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta Education will each offer a workshop for new or inexperienced administrators. The other three general interest sessions will have Chuck Wills and John Dyer of the Calgary Board of Education on "Team Building: A Shared Values Approach," Tony Wadsworth, an Edmonton insurance executive, on "Risk Management for Municipalities," and Neil Murray offering a course in performance appraisal.

On Tuesday evening there will be a banquet, graduation of those completing the Certificate, Citation and Senior Executive Fellows programs, a guest speaker, and a program to acknowledge the fiftieth refresher course.

Educators, municipal administrators and provincial government managers from across Canada will also be in attendance to attend the Canadian Local Government Training and Education Forum. Discussions will focus on professional development of municipal administrators from a national perspective.

Society of Local Government Managers

Thanks to the joint efforts of the Local Government Administrators Association and the Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators Association, a nonprofit Society of Local Government Managers is now being incorporated. It will have two objectives:

a) to promote professionalism in local government management through various professional development activities

b) to promote the effective participation of local government managers in forums that deal with local government concerns.

The LGAA and ARMAA, which will each provide three board members to the new society, will remain as separate organizations.

Jim Masson, a former municipal administrator, is preparing the additional documentation necessary for the registration of an association which, in turn, would validate the professional standing of Certified Local Government Manager, Administrator or Clerk.

Welcome Back Edd, Thanks Bert

Bert Einsiedel will, following the 50th MRC, be taking a sabbatical for a year. Upon his return to the University of Alberta, he will undertake new responsibilities in the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta, in relation to protected areas management. Edd LeSage will be adding MRC to his current duties in public administration. Given his talent for program assessment and response coupled with his experience, changes will undoubtedly be proposed as required.

In the future...
"I see the possibility of other Canadians, perhaps even non-Canadians, who will journey to Banff to participate in MRC. Albertans can be proud of their local governments and what they have invested, educationally, to enhance the level of professionalism of municipal managers and their staff over these decades. MRC can be a forum for sharing their ideas with peers from other parts of the world." (Bert Einsiedel, Feb. 1988)

The best part...
"of the Municipal Refresher Course is the congregation of administrators from all types and sizes of municipalities from all over Alberta getting together to swap problems, innovative ideas and socialize." (Vera Engels, March 1988)

Bert Einsiedel teaching a general interest course in 1987.
Photo: University of Alberta

Conclusion

The existence of a course such as this one reinforces the idea that education is a life long experience. Notwithstanding the years of service in local government or in the school system, administrators have made it a priority to attend this annual event.

As one scans the 50 year period some changes are quite evident - course content, administrator/elected official balance, length, attendance, speakers, spousal attendance and the like. The process used in gathering this information, primarily that of examining formal written records, clearly leaves much out...evening sessions in hospitality suites, golf in the mountain setting and friendships made. There has been no mention of the shift in the all-male attendance of the first decade to today where nearly one half are female. Nor has it been explored why cities have only provided a token number of participants.

Through the use of the quotations, photos and recent comments it is hoped that some balance between the plans and the events, the written record and the social context is introduced. There were more jokes in the transcripts but not all stand the test of time!

The Future?

The need of administrators coupled with the desire of the program directors will no doubt ensure many more years of courses. One may question whether or not the trend of the last decade to generic courses has gone far enough. Is there a need to explore in depth questions being raised in other venues such as municipal legislation, local government's role in economic development, privatization, or its role in coordinating services provided by other local or regional institutions including the not-for-profit sector?

The give and take between senior government staff and Course participants is no longer visible. Does this now take place at the zone or regional meetings? Have the annual meetings of ARMAA and LGAA, now no longer held at the conference, become the vehicle for this discussion? Or does this happen at the sessions in Banff now, perhaps informally?

Is there a place for those now retired to meet old friends...a Senior Seniors?

The desired vision for the future will have to account for the continuing interest by some practitioners for university degrees and diplomas. Extension courses are not recognized as transfer courses. One cannot at present, for example, apply successfully completed Certificate or Senior Executive Fellows courses for credit in a hypothetical degree of Bachelor of Commerce with a public administration major. Because of the dispersed nature of the potential student body, many of whom are full time staff in local government with a probable preference for correspondence courses coupled with some seminars, Athabasca University and its degree by correspondence granting status may need to be a future participating institution.

Notwithstanding the possible evolution to a degree program the need for a short course in Banff continues.

One could not ask for a finer location in the world. Demand by other groups for space at the Banff Centre is high and the model or pattern set by this Course is emulated by others. The originators, the municipal and school administrator, need "refreshment" as much as any professional.

May there be many happy returns.

Appendices

1 - References

In lieu of frequent references in the text to sources the following is provided.

The Western Municipal News

Established in 1906, it was "published monthly in the interests of Good Citizenship and the Progress of Western Municipalities, in all that pertains to good government and the comfort of the inhabitants by The Willson Stationary Co., Limited, Winnipeg." (1948) It was the "official organ" of municipal associations in the prairie provinces.

Material on the Refresher Course was usually submitted by someone on the ARMAA executive. Copies of back issues were located in the Manitoba Legislature Library. With the assistance of Judy Stephenson of Manitoba Municipal Affairs and Bettie Bayrak of Alberta Municipal Affairs copies of references to the Course for the period 1939 to 1959 were obtained.

Proceedings of the Municipal Refresher Course

Minutes of the Course and Association annual meetings were kept from 1939 to 1973 inclusive. They were produced by ARMAA or its predecessors. Secretarial service was provided for many years by Eve Bergman of a secretarial service in Calgary. Incomplete sets of these documents can be found at the Alberta Museum and Archives, the University Archives in Rutherford Library, and the Faculty of Extension (Ring House 2). Edwin Koberstein of Lacombe had copies of missing volumes.

Municipal Counsellor

This publication of Alberta Municipal Affairs provides reasonable coverage of the Refresher Courses from inception of the publication in 1956 through to 1967. Thereafter, there are gaps and the coverage scant. Several of the photos used herein were obtained from back issues.

Faculty of Extension Annual Reports

These reports were the primary source for attendance data. Available in Rutherford Library, they were especially helpful for the years 1939 to 1959. Don Bancroft included a 2-3 page annual report with the Proceedings during his tenure.

Faculty of Extension Files

With the cessation of the Proceedings, Extension files were reviewed for course content and attendance data.

ARMAA Minutes of Meetings

Minutes covering the last decade were reviewed.

2 - Course Administrators

Senator Donald Cameron

Donald Cameron was born in England in 1903, attended high school near Innisfail, Alberta, and graduated with a B.Sc. in Agriculture from the University of Alberta in 1930. In September 1930, he was appointed Lecturer and Agricultural Secretary, Department of Extension, University of Alberta. In 1933, he was awarded a Carnegie Scholarship to study adult education in Europe. In 1936, Mr. Cameron became Acting Director of Extension with the full appointment coming in 1938.

Mr. Cameron was the "sparkplug" that coordinated the Refresher Course until about 1950. Following this time, he increasingly shifted his time to the Banff School, a unit of the Department of Extension, and continued to welcome the delegates to the Course and to Banff. He was appointed to the Senate in July 1955, resigned his position as Director of Extension in 1956, but maintained the position of Director of the Banff Centre until his retirement in 1969. Now 84 years of age, he resides in Calgary.

Colonel Eric Cormack

Eric Cormack, born in Scotland in 1899, attended the University of Edinburgh (Diploma in Forestry and Veterinary Sciences, 1922) and the University of Alberta (B.Sc. in Agriculture, 1925). After farming and some teaching at the Vermillion School of Agriculture (and some Army service), he joined the Department of Extension in 1949. Eric Cormack was responsible for several programs of the Department of Extension including those for farmers, farm wives, young people and natives as well as the training of municipal and school administrators. He retired from the Department in August, 1964, and died in Edmonton in December, 1987.

Duncan Campbell

Mr. Campbell was appointed to the Department of Extension in Fall 1949. With Donald Cameron giving much of his energy to the Banff School of Fine Arts, Mr. Campbell was essentially "Acting" Director until his appointment to the Director's position in 1956. He wrote the Department's Annual Reports from 1950 to 1970. Although retired as Director in 1974, he remained as professor. His "emeritus" status affords him the opportunity to maintain an office at the Faculty of Extension.

Donald Bancroft

Mr. Bancroft was born and raised in Vulcan, graduated from high school in Calgary, the Olds School of Agriculture, and the University of Alberta (Bachelor of Agriculture). Following several years of work as an assessor in Stettler, Mr. Bancroft returned to the University of Alberta and completed a Master's degree in Economics. He was hired by the Department of Extension in June 1958 as a lecturer in the Public Administration Training Division. In 1967, Mr. Bancroft took a year's leave of absence to do course work at Syracuse, New York, leading to a Ph. D. in Public Administration and Finance. He resigned his position in Extension in 1974 although he continued to lecture for the Department. Presently, Don Bancroft lives in Edmonton, and is semi-retired dividing his time between tutoring some students enrolled in a Public Finance course at Athabasca University and enjoying the countryside on a quarter section near Gwynne (Camrose).

Zack Kay

Mr. Kay, with a university background in political science, was an assistant to Don Bancroft in the early 1960s. He left to complete a university course in Israel returning in the mid-1960s to the staff at Queen's University.

Joe E. Mulloy

Mr. Mulloy, with the Department of Extension from June 1962 to 1968, was responsible for the preparation of accounting and finance material for the courses, lecturing in these areas, and assisting at the Banff Courses. He, Donald Bancroft and a secretary were the team that maintained the program for municipal, school and assessment officials. Mr. Mulloy has been in the employ of the City of Edmonton since 1968.

E. C. LeSage Jr.

Edd LeSage is an Associate Professor and the Director of Public Administration Studies, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta. He headed the Local Government Studies Program of the Faculty of Extension from March 1975 to June 1982. Professor LeSage is a political scientist and adult educator trained at Carleton University, McMaster University and California State University. His areas of academic specialty include public administration theory, organization theory, local government, and Canadian government and politics.

Albert A. Einsiedel Jr.

Appointed program director in September 1982, Dr. Einsiedel's degrees are in Psychology (B.A., University of the Philippines, 1966; M.A., California State Univ., Chico, 1970; and Ph.D., Indiana Univ., 1973) Prior to coming to the U. of A., he was Director of the Human Services Management Program in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y. and Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Social and Political Psychology. He will begin a sabbatical from his current responsibilities as Director, Local Government Studies Program in mid-1988.

3 - Attendance Statistics at the Municipal Refresher Course

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948
Delegates	**97**	**70**	**64**	**60**	**70**	**67**	**59**	**76**	**60**	**70**
	1949	**1950**	**1951**	**1952**	**1953**	**1954**	**1955**	**1956**	**1957**	**1958**
Delegates	**55**	**63**	**56**	**65**	**75**	**75**	**47**	**66**	**67**	**75**
	1959	**1960**	**1961**	**1962**	**1963**	**1964**	**1965**	**1966**	**1967**	**1968**
Urban Elected		3	1	-	6	10	14	16	16	18
Urban Admin.		27	19	49	31	49	58	56	47	73
Rural Elected		43	34	45	31	49	58	56	47	73
Rural Admin.		37	43	48	57	52	51	53	49	52
Total Delegates	**71**	**86**	**97**	**164**	**183**	**225**	**232**	**238**	**215**	**266**
	1969	**1970**	**1971**	**1972**	**1973**	**1974**	**1975**	**1976**	**1977**	**1978**
Urban Elected	22	25	25	29	27	38	43	59	27	
Urban Admin.	94	108	102	106	116	142	164	144	116	
Rural Elected	69	84	85	86	90	74	114	161	90	
Rural Admin.	56	52	61	52	57	64	66	66	57	
Total Delegates	**241**	**269**	**273**	**290**	**290**	**350**	**407**	**438**	**362**	**231**
	1979	**1980**	**1981**	**1982**	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	
Urban Admin.	153	162	190	175						
Rural Admin.	64	65	65	50						
Workshops						157				
Seniors						47				
Municipal							207	188	187	
SBOSC							*60	75	40	
Total Delegates	**217**	**228**	**260**	**230**		**204**	**207**	**263**	**227**	

*Held separately

Attendance Trends